

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 and 35-37 are pending in the application; claims 25-34 are withdrawn. After entry of this Amendment, claims 1-24 and 35-37 will be pending.

Claim 21 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Claim 21 has been amended to overcome this rejection.

Claims 1-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Martin et al. (USP 6,272,551). Applicants have amended the independent claims and, as amended, respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection.

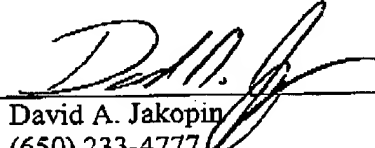
The claims have been amended to clarify that the invention includes replacing the FC control character with a data character of the intermediate protocol that represents the FC control character. This data character can subsequently be transferred back into the FC control character after transmission through an intermediate network. As described in the application, this replacement prevents confusion within the intermediate network of intermediate network control characters and FC control characters – thus preventing FC control characters from accidentally being identified as intermediate network control characters. The '551 patent cited by the Examiner does not teach or suggest this aspect of the invention.

Furthermore, new claims 35-37 are directed to transmitting and/or receiving the packetized encapsulated sequence a plurality of N times when there has not been a previous first protocol data operation. This ensures that FC protocol is complied with, irrespective of whether there is required an intermediate network protocol data operation. These claims also contain allowable subject matter.

If any issues remain which the Examiner feels may be resolved through a telephone interview, s/he is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
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